In its interim report on the 'Towards Freedom' Project, the Committee has observed that attempts were made to scuttle the project through stoppage of funds and interruption in the publication of the volumes. The Committee has recommended the completion of the project within 24 months and the constitution of an Editorial Board with an eminent historian as the General Editor. The Committee has also recommended the streamlining of the procedures of publication and has suggested that the Government take a view regarding the present Council, including its Chairman.

On the issue of the 'non-submission of research work by scholars', the Committee has observed irregularities in the award of the Senior Research Fellowships and the National Fellowships, such as no proper representation to the different regions of the country, SCs/STs, women and the minorities. The Committee has recommended a Standing Search Committee to award National Fellowships, and the institution of a system of nominations to the Senior Search Fellowships as well as the computerisation of the fellowships programme and, the travel grant programme. The Committee has also recommended the recovery of fellowship grants from the defaulters.

The Government has accepted the recommendations of the Committee in the interim report on the "non-publication/stoppage of volumes of Towards Freedom Project", and the ICHR has been directed to take action on the same. The interim report of the Committee on "non-submission of research work by scholars" is under examination.

Upkeep of Taj Mahal

*279. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether UNESCO has made concrete suggestions for upkeep of Taj Mahal at Agra and maintenance of its surroundings and environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) (a) Yes Sir. Based on the UNESCO-ICOMOS Joint Monitoring Mission, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in its meeting held in June-July 2004 has made the following recommendations concerning the World Heritage properties Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri.

(i) Set up a body to coordinate and address all the conservation and development challenges of the three World Heritage properties in the Agra District by involving all the stakeholders.

(ii) Evaluate and redefine the World Heritage protective boundaries and management guidelines pertaining to the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

(iii) Integrate the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort as one protected World Heritage area to ensure better management of the property, with a possible inclusion of Fatehpur Sikri subject to a broader regional planning scheme.

(iv) Elaborate a comprehensive site management plan, including a specific visitor management plan, based on a regional plan for conservation and development of the World Heritage properties, and ensure its implementation.

(v) Improve the on-site interpretation and visitor management at the World Heritage properties.

(vi) Set up on-site monitoring mechanisms, to assess the impact of urban development on the World Heritage values of the properties and their surrounding areas so as to integrate the protection of urban landscape into the overall heritage protection mechanism.

(vii) Organise a National Workshop on the elaboration of Site Management Plans for the preparation of the World Heritage extension(s), including the upgrading of the protective boundary and buffer zones.

(c) Steps are being taken for preparation of comprehensive site management plan for all the three World Heritage Sites.

Progress in poverty alleviation

*280. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

Will the Minister of URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country has made the most notable progress in poverty